



If I Be Lifted Up

Very dramatic events in the wilderness.

Involving the fiery serpents in Numbers 21.

The people of Israel complained.

God sent fiery serpents that bit and killed many.

Numbers 21:6 **And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.**

Fiery (Hebrew, seraph) can refer to serpents.

Appearance reddish-copper colour.

Or to the burning inflammation their venom produced.

Israel today has snakes called seraphs.

The people had to confess their sin.

God did not remove the serpents.

He provided the remedy against the fatality.

Numbers 21:8 **And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.**

The bronze image focused the Israelites' faith on God.

Everyone bitten could look to His promise and live.

The copper came from the hoard of items.

Exodus 3:21-22 **And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.**

The Egyptians' source of copper was the Tina valley.

It included a temple to Hathor.

A goddess often depicted as a cow.

Undoubtedly, this was the golden calf.

The people had rejected God's promises

The Midianites also worshiped at this site.

In the shrine was a snake with a gilded head.

It resembles the serpent in Numbers.

The image of the bronze serpent.

Called Nehushtan (brazen thing),

It was preserved for centuries.

By the time of King Hezekiah (715-687 BC).

It had lost its significance.

It was a promise to save sinners.

It became a cult.

It was thought to have magical healing powers.

There have always been snake cults.

The bronze serpent became like an idol.

But Hezekiah destroyed it.

2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

Jesus used the fiery-serpent incident.

Used to explain how He interceded for us.

We were fatally bitten by that old serpent.

Revelation 12:9 **And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

Dying from the poison of sin.

John 3:14-16 **And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

The source of sinful suffering cannot be removed.

But we have a remedy from its fatal effects.

If we realise we are doomed to die for our sin.

Romans 5:12 **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.**

Then look to the Cross.

The object God has raised up

To heal the poison of sin.

John 12:32 **And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**

We will live eternally with Christ.

God will remove the serpent forever.

Revelation 20:10 **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**